

to conduct official business, putting fairness back into the appeals process, and ensuring taxpayers know the status of IRS investigations. This is not much to ask. Just tell us what is going on.

These bills are important steps toward a level of accountability the Obama administration has been unwilling to take. This is good legislation. It sets our bureaucrats straight.

□ 1045

# WE CANNOT PERMANENTLY BE AT WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND TAKE CARE OF OUR OWN PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Madam Speaker, many years ago, I voted for the first gulf war after attending classified briefings about the great threats we faced from Saddam Hussein's elite troops; then I watched them surrender to CNN camera crews and empty tanks. I realized then that the threat had been greatly exaggerated.

A few years later, we rushed to war in Iraq against weapons of mass destruction that were not there. The threat at the time of the second gulf war was greatly exaggerated, and I am glad that I voted against going to war that time.

After the horrible beheadings of two American citizens, I felt we should respond, and I have publicly supported limited air strikes. I hope we can at some point, if we are not doing so already, send in a special operations team, or teams, to get those who have committed these beheadings just as we got Osama bin Laden; however, I do not support sending thousands of young Americans as combat troops on the ground into Middle Eastern civil and religious wars.

The primary responsibility for fighting over there should be up to the countries in that region, and I do not believe we should have some fake coalition where most of the fighting and most of the funding comes from the U.S. military as in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

While ISIS—or ISIL, as it has also been referred to—is a threat, we have faced far greater threats at other times in our history.

Some of our leaders clamor for war to prove how tough they are. Some want to be little Churchills. Many may believe, if they don't support the strongest possible action, they are afraid they will be blamed if something bad happens; however, both our President and the Secretary of Homeland Security have said our intelligence and military officials have no evidence of any credible threat against the U.S. at this point.

In addition, we have spent \$716 billion on homeland security since 9/11, just at the Federal level, not counting

the billions spent by State and local governments and private companies. Just one company, FedEx, told me a couple of years after 9/11 that they had spent \$200 million on security that they would not have spent had 9/11 not happened.

On top of that, we spend much more on defense than the next top 10 nations combined and almost more than all nations combined since the poor nations spend very little on defense. If we devoted our entire Federal budget to the Middle East, we could not stop all the fighting or solve all the problems of that region. If we spent our entire Federal budget on homeland security, we could not make our country 100 percent perfectly safe.

Some radical Islamic fanatic may do something bad in the U.S. but we are already spending all we can and doing all we can if we are going to meet the needs of our own people. The first obligation of the U.S. Congress should be to the American people, and the people of the Middle East are going to have to solve most of their own problems on their own.

We do not have the money or the authority to try to run the whole world, and we certainly shouldn't panic or overreact to this threat from ISIS. Just a few weeks ago, their numbers were supposedly between 5,000 and 10,000. Now, we suddenly have them up to 20,000 to 31,000, but we have over 1 million in our military, and, supposedly, other nations are going to help against ISIS.

The leaders of ISIS have proven themselves to be cowards by beheading unarmed, defenseless men in front of cameras in undisclosed locations. We fought against al Qaeda in Iraq and Afghanistan and then with al Qaeda in Libya. A year ago, our hawks wanted to take out Assad in Syria. Now, we want to have him with us against ISIS.

I agree with what Judge Andrew Napolitano wrote a few days ago:

What should Congress do? It should declare once and for all that we will stay out of this ancient Muslim civil war of Shia versus Sunni. We have been on both sides of it. Each side is barbarous. In the 1980s, we helped the Sunnis. Now, we are helping the Shias.

Last year, Mr. Obama offered to help the Islamic state by degrading its adversaries; now, he wants to degrade the Islamic state. We have slaughtered innocents and squandered fortunes in an effort to achieve temporary military victories that neither enhance our freedom nor fortify our safety.

We will only have peace when we come home, when we cease military intervention in an area of the world not suited for democracy and in which we are essentially despised.

I agree with Judge Napolitano.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I say again that we cannot take care of our own people and our country if we are permanently at war in the Middle East.

## WILDFIRE SEASON IN THE WEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from

California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Madam Speaker, last night, in the town of Weed, California, which is in my own First Congressional District, over 100 of my constituents' homes were destroyed or damaged by fire, along with an elementary school and a timber mill, one of the area's largest employers. Thousands of my constituents are under evacuation orders, and the fire is not yet contained.

Aside from this tragedy, hundreds of thousands of acres of northern California forests have burned so far this year. In fact, the combined impact of the fires is already larger than last year's Rim Fire near Yosemite.

Unfortunately, while the Rim Fire received nonstop coverage, most of America is probably unaware of this year's calamities. The unfortunate truth is that rural California and much of the West experience massive wildfires like these every year. Over the past decade, wildfires have only grown in size and severity.

Madam Speaker, it doesn't have to be this way. We know why our forests are burning. It is because of decades of mismanagement caused by Federal bureaucracies and excessive regulations and red tape. They have an attitude at the Forest Service in many cases of just let it burn.

We suffer from road closures, inaccessibility to our forests, poor management, and, certainly, the ability to stop fires once they are started because of these policies.

The simple fact is our forests are not just mismanaged or even poorly managed. They are entirely unmanaged. As a result, they are overgrown, unhealthy, and ready to burst into flames at any time. I am supporting several measures to address the crisis in our forests, and last night's events create even more urgency for Congress and this administration to act.

Chairman HASTINGS' bill, H.R. 1526, which was passed in this House and I am a cosponsor of, would restore common sense to forest management, requiring the Forest Service to actively manage public forests to reduce fuel loads and improve forest health.

It is high time that the Senate act on this measure or, at the very least, produce its own forestry measure in the Senate so we can negotiate a final product. This would be part of the now 384 House bills that are languishing over in the Senate that need action.

Chairman SIMPSON's bill, H.R. 3992, another measure I am supporting and cosponsoring, will end the diversion of forest management funding to firefighting by treating fires like other disasters, allowing flexible wildfire disaster funding.

The Forest Service's increasing use of forest management funds for wildfire suppression means that we are no longer in the business of managing forests and, instead, just putting them out—or trying to—when they burn. This measure deserves a hearing in

committee and action on the floor before this session ends.

Madam Speaker, without action on these bills, our forests will continue to burn. Our constituents will continue to see their homes and livelihoods destroyed, and rural communities across the West will continue to suffer.

In the House this year, we hear about this being a do-nothing Congress and how it has been the least productive. The House of Representatives has been doing its job.

When we have 384-plus bills sitting over in the Senate languishing, waiting for action, then it is a misnomer that action is not going on in this House; indeed, it is a do-nothing Senate.

The people of the West in the line of these fires are suffering and demand action of their government. When they are not getting it, they are the victims.

Madam Speaker, before the end of this year, we need to take serious action on the management of our forests by allowing timber to be cut and processed in order to achieve forest health. We have an overload. We have an inventory in our forests.

There is much more that can be sustainable, on the number of trees per acre, on what is safe and healthy for the trees as they compete for limited water supply underground, therefore, stressing the trees, causing them to be susceptible and more in danger of insects that weaken and kill the trees; it is, thereby, a self-perpetuating prophesy of forests that are weak and then burn.

Madam Speaker, my constituents in Siskiyou County and last night in Weed, California, have suffered from this mismanagement—the nonmanagement—the incompetence and even what some people feel is criminal treatment they are getting from their Federal Government because of inactivity.

Madam Speaker, it is high time we pass these measures and do what we need to do to make our forests healthy and safe, as well as help the economy for those people. Certainly, in Congress and our government, we use a lot of wood and paper products. Why should they not come from California or from our Western States?

#### REMEMBERING JOAN D'ALESSANDRO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. GARRETT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARRETT. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Joan D'Alessandro and to recognize her mother, Rosemarie, for her tireless dedication to victims' rights and child safety.

In 1973, Joan D'Alessandro was sexually molested and murdered by her neighbor, Joseph McGowan, after she simply went to his house to deliver Girl Scout cookies. Joan's body was found 3 days later, on Easter Sunday, in New York States' Harriman State

Park. Joseph McGowan was later convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to life in prison.

Joan was 7 years old when she was murdered. This month, she would have celebrated her 49th birthday. In the four decades since her death, her mother, Rosemarie, has used the tragedy of her daughter's death as a motivation to ensure the protection of other children.

She has mounted several successful campaigns to keep her daughter's killer behind bars, and she has worked tirelessly to strengthen laws against child predators.

In the 1990s, Rosemarie launched a grassroots movement to pass what is called Joan's Law. This legislation imposes a life without parole sentence on anyone convicted of molesting and murdering a child under 14. Governor Christine Todd Whitman signed the bill into law in 1997. President Clinton signed a Federal version of this law in 1998.

Even with these successes, Rosemarie continues to do even more. Earlier this year, she unveiled a butterfly sculpture and garden in Hillsdale, New Jersey. This sculpture is a tribute to Joan's life. It also serves as a reminder to each and every one of us to be diligent about keeping our own children safe.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in coming together to remember Joan's birthday; moreover, I ask you to join me in thanking Rosemarie for all she has done to protect countless other children.

We will never fully understand the grief that she has suffered all these years, but we hope that she finds comfort in knowing that we are inspired by her determination to make the world a safer place.

#### RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 58 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

#### AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

#### PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer: Loving God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

In these waning days of deliberation before Members leave to focus on the upcoming election, bless them with focus on the pressing matters of these days. May they be filled with wisdom and a spirit of goodwill and cooperation that good solutions to unfinished business might be arrived at together.

Finally, bless our world with peace and all those seeking an end to violence.

May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. WOLF led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

#### SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL RICE MONTH

(Mr. CRAWFORD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight one of my favorite months of the year, initiated in 1991 by Congress. September is known as National Rice Month.

With its healthy attributes, it should be no surprise that the typical American will consume, on average, 25 pounds of rice this year.

Mr. Speaker, I represent the largest rice-producing district in all of America, and I also am cochairman of the Congressional Rice Caucus. I have seen firsthand for several years the hard work that producers in the First District of Arkansas put into making a crop year after year that feeds not only us here at home, but also feeds countless others across the world.

So, as we stop and consider all the products here at home we have come to enjoy that include rice, let us also remember that our rice producers will export over 2 million metric tons of rice to markets all over the world this year. Our rice producers are feeding us here at home, Mr. Speaker, and they are also feeding the world.

#### UKRAINE PRESIDENT'S UPCOMING ADDRESS TO JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS

(Mr. QUIGLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)